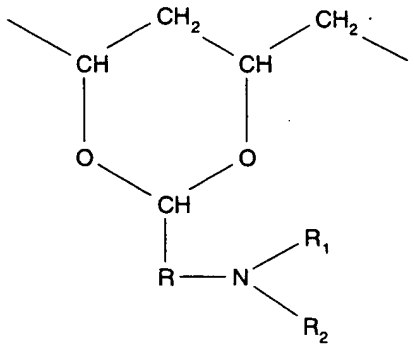
Claims:

1. Process for the manufacture of a molding comprising the steps:
a) preparing an aqueous solution comprising a water-soluble prepolymer having crosslinkable groups and a further polymer which is devoid of crosslinkable groups,
b) introducing the solution obtained into a mold,
c) triggering the crosslinking, and
d) opening the mold such that the molding can be removed from the mold.

2. A process according to claim 1, wherein the crosslinkable prepolymer having crosslinkable groups is a derivative of a polyvinyl alcohol having a molecular weight of at least about 2 000 that, based on the number of hydroxy groups of the polyvinyl alcohol, comprises from approximately 0.5 to approximately 80 % of units of formula



(1)

wherein R is C_1-C_8-alkylene, R_1 is hydrogen or C_1-C_7-alkyl and R_2 is an olefinically unsaturated, electron-attracting, copolymerizable radical preferably having up to 25 carbon atoms.

3. A radical according to claim 2, wherein R_2 is a radical of formula

$$-CO-NH-(R_4-NH-CO-O)_q-R_5-O-CO-R_3 \quad (2),$$

wherein q is zero or one and R_4 and R_5 are each independently C_2-C_8-alkylene, C_6-C_{12}-arylene, a saturated divalent C_6-C_{10}-cycloaliphatic group, C_7-C_{14}-arylenealkylene or C_7-C_{14}-alkylenearylene or C_{13}-C_{16}-arylenealkylenearylene, and R_3 is C_2-C_8-alkenyl.

4. A process according to claim 2, wherein R is C_1-C_4-alkylene, R_1 is hydrogen or C_1-C_4-alkyl, and R_2 is a radical R_3-CO-, in which R_3 is C_2-C_4-alkenyl.

5. A process according to claim 1, wherein the further polymer being devoid of a polymerizable group in step a) is a polymer that forms a clear aqueous solution together with the prepolymer having crosslinkable groups.

6. A process according to claim 1, wherein the further polymer being devoid of a polymerizable group in step a) is a polyacrylamide, N,N-dimethyl acrylamide, polyvinyl pyrrolidone or a polyoxyethylene derivative.

7. A process according to claim 1, wherein the further polymer being devoid of a polymerizable group in step a) is a polyethylene-polypropylene block copolymer.

8. A process according to claim 1, wherein the further polymer being devoid of a polymerizable group in step a) is present in the aqueous solution in an amount of from 0.5 to 10 % by weight, based on the entire weight of the aqueous solution.

9. A process according to claim 1, wherein according to step c) the prepolymer is photocrosslinked in the presence of a photoinitiator.

10. A process according to claim 9, wherein the photocrosslinking is carried out for a time period of less than five minutes.

11. A process according to claim 1 for the manufacture of a biomedical molding.

12. A molding obtainable by the process of claim 1.

13. A process according to claim 1, wherein the further polymer being devoid of a polymerizable group in step a) is present in the aqueous solution in an amount of from 0.5 to 3 % by weight, based on the entire weight of the aqueous solution.

14. A process according to claim 11, wherein the biomedical molding is a contact lens, intraocular lens or artificial cornea.